

11/15/77

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

November 15, 1977

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The Honorable
Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Washington, DC

Dear Cy:

As you may know, my office has been discussing with your human rights group a number of cases involving continued violation of human rights in Argentina. I appreciate the professional way in which they have responded to our requests.

I look forward to your forthcoming trip to Argentina as a key occasion for you to pursue our human rights interests. You have been asked by the Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy to intervene on behalf of thousands of innocent people who have been kidnapped, detained and tortured in that unfortunate country. I support that request, and hope that you will seize every occasion to remind the Argentine authorities of the profound humanitarian issues at stake. In any event, I urge you to meet separately and privately with democratic political and human rights leaders in Buenos Aires --- thereby demonstrating our commitment to restoration of democratic rule and respect of human rights in Argentina.

I would like to draw to your attention five specific cases which I believe merit special efforts during your trip and in follow-up action both here and in Buenos Aires. These are cases, Cy, in which the families have appealed to me personally, and Amnesty International and church groups (including confidentially the Vatican) have taken a direct interest.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

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Box 4855

The Honorable
Cyrus R. Vance

Page Two

November 15, 1977

First is the case of Marcelo Gelman and Claudia Garcia-Gelman, the son and daughter-in-law of the Argentine poet Juan Gelman, who is an active critic and opponent of President Videla. Like so many other terrible cases, they were kidnapped but are reliably confirmed to be detained without charge in Argentine prisons. There is simply no excuse to penalize the children for the actions of their father --- I need hardly add legitimate actions; indeed, after we had made strenuous efforts Gelman's daughter was released by the Argentines last year. ✓

Second are the terrible cases of the disappearance of the three children, and their respective spouses, of Mrs. Matilde Herrera. In less than a year following July 1976, a whole family disappeared in Argentina. I enclose a copy of Mrs. Herrera's self-explanatory and heartbreaking appeal, on which she has sought my personal intervention. ✓

Third is the case of Dagmar Ingrid Hagelin, of dual Swedish and Argentine citizenship, who was shot and abducted by military security forces last January in Buenos Aires. Despite representations by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Sweden and despite President Videla's undertaking last August to clear up this case, Argentina has yet to supply any information as to the whereabouts of this 17-year-old girl. I have a personal appeal from her father for help, and I hope that you can assist in responding to his plea and that of his Government. ✓

Fourth is the case of former President Hector Campora, who remains under asylum in the Mexican Embassy in Buenos Aires. I believe it would be a positive and easily achievable gesture for President Videla to permit Campora to leave the country in the near future. ✓

The Honorable
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Page Three

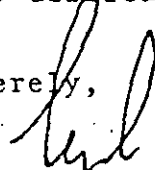
November 15, 1977

Fifth is the case of Claudio and Irene Bermann. Professor Bermann, Director of the Neuropathic Institute of Cordoba, has been under detention without charges since April 1976. I have an appeal from his sister, Dr. Sylvia Bermann, who is in hiding from the authorities, and whose daughter Irene was kidnapped in November 1976 and allegedly tortured while under detention without charges. The previous July, two close colleagues of Dr. Bermann's at the Polyclinic Finochietto, Drs. Raul Fuentes and Juan Carlos Risau, were kidnapped with no word since about their whereabouts. ✓

I do not underestimate the difficulty of your resolving these and I am sure many other cases of serious concern. But I am hopeful that through persistent efforts, on our part and that of other Governments and non-governmental organizations, our interventions will help rescue at least some of these unfortunate human beings. Please feel free to mention my personal concern to President Videla if you believe this will help. For my part, I am prepared to appeal directly on these and other cases as soon as you can advise me of the nature and results of your efforts.

My thanks and best wishes on this difficult but important trip,

Sincerely,



Edward M. Kennedy